

*Of the Relative Engagement between
Ancestry and Posterity.*

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S E R M O N

Preach'd before the

Univerfity of *Cambridge*,

I N

King's College C H A P P E L, on the
25th of *March* 1707.

BEING THE

A N N I V E R S A R Y

FOR

COMMEMORATING King HENRY VI.
The Founder of that and *Eton* College.

By *ANDREW SNAPE*, D. D. Chaplain
to his Grace the Duke of *SOMERSET*, and
Fellow of *KING'S* College.

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and Heads of Colleges.*

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PSALM CXII. 9.

---His Righteousness endureth for
ever----

THIS Excellent *Psalm* is introduc'd with a Prefatory *Halleluiab*, or Exhortation to Praise God, tho', as to the Substance of it, it is, in a manner, wholly taken up in setting forth the Praise of Men, from whence I cannot but observe to you, before I proceed any farther, that whatever Praises and Encomiums we bestow on the best of Men, whatever Actions they have perform'd, for the Advancement of Religion, or Benefit of Mankind, for the sake of which we are induc'd to stile them Good and Vertuous, Great and Honorable, or by any other Names of Dignity or Distinction; yet the Glory of all must be ascrib'd to God, as the Primary and Original Cause, who endu'd them with Grace and Power to perform such Actions.

There is indeed a vast and amazing Difference between one Man and another, both as to the Capacity and Inclination of doing good. As bad as the World has been, there have not been wanting some in all Ages, who have discover'd in the whole Conduct of their Lives, such a transcendent Greatness and Nobleness of Soul, such an unaffected Complacency in Acts of Kindness and

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Beneficence, such an honest and friendly Zeal for the Happiness of others, such a generous Concern for the common Welfare, and such an unwearied Application in promoting it; as if they were born for others more than for themselves, as if they were design'd by Heaven, as public Blessings, to be the Joy and Delight of Mankind, and to convince us what a Paradise this Earth might be, if every Man, like them, would lay aside all Selfishness and Narrowness of Spirit, and all, in their respective Stations, would conspire in procuring general Good, and establishing universal Peace and Love.

But on the other hand it is too sad, and too evident a Truth, that, tho' all Men agree in acknowledging the Beauty and Excellence of such a Character, and the happy Effects that would follow from such a joint Concurrence in promoting so noble a Design; yet the greatest part of Mankind are too intent on their private Views, and the pursuit of their separate Interests, to contribute in any good Degree to so great and general a Blessing.

Some are discourag'd from any such attempt, because they think it would be in vain, for that the great Majority would still be for seeking their own, in Preference to the common Good; whom therefore they cannot think it reasonable to let into the benefits of their Disinterestedness and Generosity, since they will not act upon the Square with 'em, since they are so tenacious, uncommunicative, and ἀσύμβολοι, as not to help toward it in any Proportion.

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Some again appear very active and zealous for a time, in encouraging Works of a public Nature, so long as they find their own Account in them, and can advance their particular Interests in Conjunction with a more general Good. But when that ceases to be the Case, the Zeal soon abates, the bold and undertaking Spirit begins to flag and tire, and the glorious Schemes are let fall to the Ground.

But then there are others so habitually deprav'd, so totally immers'd and buried in Self-love, so wedded to their own Advantage, and so devoid of any kind Regards for any one besides, such
* Renegados and Apostates from all that is sociable and humane; that they cannot form one generous

Thought, nor conceive any notion of such a Pleasure, as consists merely in beholding or procuring the Happiness of others, in which themselves are to have no real Share. And therefore they will not be induc'd by any Considerations to forego the smallest Advantage to themselves, they will hardly bestow the least Care or Forecast, much less any Labor, Hazard, or Expence, tho' to the furtherance of the most useful and beneficial Ends, such as the establishing God's Worship, the cultivating Piety and good Manners, obtaining the greatest Blessings, or averting the greatest Mischiefs, rescuing a perishing Soul from Misery, or saving a whole Community from Ruine.

I confess there are very few in whom all sparks of Humanity and good Nature are so utterly extinguish'd: And perhaps the Instances of Persons

* Deferunt enim vitæ societatem, quia nihil conferunt in eam studii, nihil operæ, nihil Facultatum. Cic. de Off. l. i. c. 9.

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so thoroughly obdurate, may be as rare, as those of a consummate Vertue and disinterested Love to Mankind.

But however, Examples of both sorts there are, or at least of such as very nearly approach both this and that extreme.

And so far as they do so, the one deserves our highest Censure, the other our justest Praise, Esteem and Veneration.

The Holy *Psalmist* indeed in the Conclusion of the Psalm now before us, tells us of a more perverse and inveterate Sort of Men than any I have been describing, who not contented to do no good themselves, would envy and repine at them that did: who, with an evil Eye and Heart would grieve when they beheld the blessedness of the Receivers, and the greater blessedness of the Givers. But he tells us withal, that they should envy and repine and grieve in vain: that they, and their malicious Designs should be blasted and consum'd, whilst the righteous, charitable Man, in whose Commendations he had been enlarging, should flourish and prosper in his Undertakings, should purchase a lasting Benefit to others, and a lasting Memory to himself: *that his righteousness should endure for ever.*

For a Man's Righteousness or Charity (which in the language of Scripture usually signify the same thing) may be said to endure for ever, both with regard to himself, and to those toward whom it is extended. And the Expression may mean, either that a Man of this Character is never faint or weary in doing well, he has no sooner accomplish'd one good Work, but he is ready to undertake

take another, he is never discourag'd, never thinks he has done enough, but persists in his pious Intentions and Endeavors thro' the whole Course of his Life. Or (which is yet more noble) he does not content himself with doing temporary and transient Acts of Charity, with exercising a short-liv'd Bounty, with freeing some lamentable Object from a present Necessity, and himself from present Importunity: But that his Works of Mercy are durable and permanent, that he consults the future Happiness of Mankind, that he studies to perpetuate his Favors, and to lay such Obligations on the World, as Ages to come may reap the Fruits of.

Or else the Perpetuity here express'd may refer to that lasting Honour and Renown that will adorn the Name and Memory of him that delights in such charitable Deeds, as succeeding Generations shall admire, and remote Posterity shall bless him for. To the same effect with what had been said in the 6th Verse, *The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.*

There is no one of these Meanings, but, by a fair and unforc'd Construction, may be applied to this Passage. They are all founded on Reason and Experience, they are all agreeable to Scripture, and not only deliver'd there in other equivalent Expressions, but these very words are apparently us'd in such different Senses.

For in the 3d. verse of the *Psalms* before this, it is said of God himself, *that his righteousness endureth for ever*; importing that his Goodness is boundless and unlimited, extending to all Persons, to all Ages and Generations. Whereas in the

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3d. verse of this *Psalms*, where the same is affirm'd of the charitable Man, the Connexion of the place determines one rather to understand it of the Reward and good Effects of his Charity, than of the largeness or extent of it, and as containing more of a Promise than Panegyric. *Wealth and Riches shall be in his house, and his righteousness endureth for ever.*

But in this verse of my Text, where it is again repeated, as also where this verse is cited by St. ^{2 Cor. 9.} *Paul*, one cannot well appropriate it to one Sense in Preference to another.

There is nothing in the main Scope and Design of the *Psalms*, that determines the Case either way, where there are frequent Transitions from the Character of a good Man, and particular Instances of his Charity, to the Reward and Blessedness that will attend him for it. And as little can we conclude from the Context. For the Words are plac'd in the middle of the verse, and if we join 'em with the former Clause, they are a Continuation of the Character, *He hath dispers'd abroad, he hath given to the poor, his righteousness endureth for ever. i.e.* He is not only liberal in relieving those who are now distress'd, but, with a more diffusive Love, provides a remedy for such as may be so hereafter.

Or if we connect it with the latter Clause; 'tis then a repeated Promise, that he and his good Works should be honorably mention'd, that no length of time should abolish the remembrance of them, that they should not only ascend for a Memorial before God; but remain a standing Memorial among Men, and excite the Generations that
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are yet unborn to praise and celebrate their Benefactor. *His righteousness endureth for ever, his horn shall be exalted with honour.*

As there is this Latitude of Interpretation, I shall hope for Excuse, if I suppose my Text to speak both these Meanings, and to teach us, that the charitable Person is both a Doer of lasting Good, and that he is entitl'd to lasting Honour. These are so far from being inconsistent with each other, that the one is almost a necessary Consequent of the other.

To this Purpose I shall at present treat of the Relative Engagement between Ancestry and Posterity, and show what the one is capable of doing, and how far oblig'd to do it for the other: that the former may, and is, in many Cases, bound to provide for the future Happiness of the latter: whose Duty it is, in return, to express a just gratitude for such Provision, by honouring the Memories, extolling the good Actions, and rightly employing the Advantages procur'd for them, by the Care and Bounty of their Ancestors.

By Ancestors, I do not barely mean our Progenitors or Fore-fathers in the same Race or Line, those from whom we derive our Genealogy and Extraction: but our Predecessors in general, those who have liv'd before us, and appear'd on the Stage of the World, where 'tis now our Turn to act our Parts, and where our Posterity, (which I likewise understand of our Successors at large) are hereafter to act theirs.

Now the providence of God has so order'd it, that those who live in the most distant Ages,
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may hold a sort of Intercourse with one another, and perform interchangeable good Offices.

First then, I shall represent to you what may be done by the Generation now, or at any time, in Being, for the Benefit of those that shall come after them, and what Duty is incumbent on them, as consider'd under that Relation.

'Tis indeed owing to this Principle, next to the Divine Care and Protection, that the World is capable of being well, and orderly administer'd, which would be nothing else but a continu'd Scene of Disorder and Confusion, if the Seeds of future discord were not timely remov'd: If every Age were to look no farther than its self, and should not provide (as far as human foresight can extend) for the stability of Government, and that without which no Government can be stable, for the security of Religion, the inculcating good Principles, and training up Youth under such Discipline as may afterwards make 'em good Men, good Christians, and good Subjects; the Preservation of public Tranquillity and private Property, for limiting betimes the Exorbitance of a justly suspected Greatness; and checking the Growth of that dangerous Power, which there is any Reason to apprehend may afterwards break out into Tyranny or Oppression, on the one hand, or on the other, into Libertinage, Tumult or Rebellion, and the utter Subversion of all Peace and Order.

This is the Care which the present Generation may and ought to take for those that are to succeed, because 'tis what they are not capable of doing for themselves, for before that time, the Evil may be too inveterate, and the Mischief spread
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too far to admit of a Remedy, and consequently there is the same Reason for it, that there is for defending an absent Person when he is rudely calumniated and defam'd, for vindicating the Honor of the Dead, who cannot speak for themselves, when it suffers by injurious Aspersions, or standing up for the Right and Interest of an Infant, or any other helpless Person, who is unable to assert his own righteous Cause.

These are Offices of common Humanity: and I say there is the same Reason for our Endeavors to prevent any Invasion or Infringment of the Rights of those who are yet unborn: to take Care it may be well with them, when we are gone, and that they may have their Portion on the Earth, as we have had ours, to* sow those hopeful and promising Seeds of Wealth and Peace and Happiness in our Days, which in theirs may arrive at Maturity and Perfection: And not to imitate the unnatural and improvident Conduct of † some we read of, who for present Gain and Greediness, forc'd their Vines to bear beyond their Strength, and left nothing to their Posterity, but dead Trunks, and an exhausted Soil: not to skin over a Sore in our own Times, which in theirs may prove fatal and incurable, nor deceitfully cover up those Embers, which may then break out into dangerous and destructive Flames: not to cry with that Inhumane of Old, Let there be Joy and Pleasure and Plenty, while I live: But *Ἐμὲ θάψοντε* when I must perish, let the World perish

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* *Serunt arbores quæ seculo alteri profint.* Cic. ex Cæcilio.

† *Fructum vero plerique quam uberrimum præsentem consecretantur, nec provident futuro tempore; sed quasi plane in diem vivant; ita imperant vitibus, & eas ita multis palmitibus onerant, ut posteritati non consulant.* Columel. l. 3. c. 3.

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with me. But to look upon our selves as acting in Trust for those that are to come, to secure to 'em all just and reasonable Immunities, and avert, as far as we are able, the possible Dangers they may be expos'd to.

It were unjust not to exemplify this Argument by a domestic Instance, at this important Juncture, when by the indefatigable Care and Wisdom and Unanimity of the Supreme Authority, so happy a Foundation is laid for the future Peace and Quiet of this Kingdom, by cutting off the Occasions of Jealousy and Dissension and the Tragical Effects of 'em, between us and a neighbouring Nation, making us one People, uniting us in the same Interests and Affections, and under the same common Denomination, securing to us the unvaluable Blessing of a Protestant Successor conforming to the best and purest of Churches. And we have Reason and Encouragement to hope, that whatever else may yet be thought wanting, to perpetuate any of the Blessings we enjoy; will be the subject of their farther Care.

In the mean time we may fairly presume, that, after the late Transactions abroad and at home, Posterity will not think this Age indebted to it, tho' some Part of the Burden of an expensive War, undertaken chiefly for their sakes, should devolve upon 'em, which will be thought an inconsiderable Price to pay for the security of their Religion, Peace and Liberty, and whatever else they account dear and precious: they will not, I say, think much to pay part of the Price when the entire Purchase is transmitted to 'em.

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But to return to my Argument. Another piece of Service that may be done for those of After-times, is, providing for the comfortable Subsistence of those that may hereafter want it, by public and lasting Works of Charity.

But why, some may say, must such a Provision be made for them that are to come? Is not every Age sufficient to take Care of such Objects of Compassion, as its self produces? What are their Wants to us, whom we are never like to know, and consequently cannot be concern'd for? Or how can one pity, any more than he can love, an unseen and unknown Object?

But this is just the Language of a churlish and uncharitable *Nabal*, *shall I give to men whom I know not whence they be?* As if our Love could not be more extensive than our Knowledge, or as if our Christian Charity requir'd no more of us, than barely the seeking of our own. Why should that large and generous Principle be bounded any more by distance of Time, than it is by that of Space? We can love our Friends tho' never so remote: and that was justly tax'd by one of old, as the most * ill-natur'd of Proverbs, which affirm'd they were no longer our Friends when dwelling at a Distance. As we are Men, there is nothing that has, or does, or can relate to human Kind; but may affect us with some Concern.

* — τῇ μισανθρωποῦτι
τῇ παροικιῶν ἀφιότητι.
Τηλὲ φίλοι ναίουσιν σὺν εἰ-
σὶν φίλοι. Athen. Deipnos.
l. 5. c. 2.

But it may be farther urg'd. We know not what will happen on the Earth, when we have left it; we cannot foresee what sort of Generation will arise next, much less how they will stand af-

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fectcd many Ages hence. We cannot be sure but that our good Designs may be perverted, our pious Meaning ridicul'd, and our Charity misemploy'd, by being either engross'd by unworthy, or invaded by sacrilegious Hands.

But neither must this Pretence hinder us from forming good Designs for the Benefit of Posterity. If this Excuse would serve, there would be the same Reason for never doing any Good at all, not even to those of our own Age. For no Man can be sure, when he does an intended Kindness, that it will have the desir'd Effect, that the Receiver will be grateful, or that he will employ his Charity to the Uses for which it was given. In such Cases Men can but act according to human Probability, and must leave the Event to Providence.

I would not be thought, by any thing I have said of the Fitness, the Reasonableness, and, in some Cases, the necessity of doing Good to Posterity; in any wise to detract from the free and unconstrain'd Liberality of our *pious Founder*, whom we are now assembled to commemorate, as if the Advantages we enjoy'd by his unparallel'd Munificence, were a Debt rather than a Gift.

Far be it from me to insinuate a Reflection so injurious and ungrateful. Charity in general is indeed a Debt. The Great and Rich are God's Stewards on Earth, and are entrusted by him with the Dispensation of those Talents they are possess'd of, But as to the particular Objects on whom their Charity is exercis'd, to them 'tis a matter of meer Grace and Favor, and they are bound to bless the hand that Administers, as well

as the Divine Goodness that both enabled and inclin'd to their Benefactors to be the Instruments of their Good.

'Tis certainly in the choice and discretion of the Possessors of Riches, to bestow their Alms where, on what Objects, in what manner, and in what Measure they think fit; provided their Liberality, in the main, bear some proportion to their Substance; and be directed to the Glory of God, and as much to the Benefit of Mankind, as can Morally be presum'd.

And I may be allow'd to say, without suspicion of Flattery or Partiality, that no one ever observ'd these Rules, more exactly, more Religiously than the good King *Henry* in the settlement of his Charity His Design in founding two such large Societies, and endowing them with a competent Maintenance for ever, for the successive Members of which they should be compos'd, was truly Great and Princely, worthy a Royal Soul, and more than proportionate even to Regal Wealth and Grandeur: scarce imitable by any Subject, and only to be undertaken by a King. And we might well have imagin'd too, if all History had fail'd us, if no Chronicle had recorded the Tumults and Disorders, the Miseries and Calamities, the frequent Turns and Revolutions with which the Reign of this excellent and godly Prince was disquieted and embroil'd, the loss of whole Provinces abroad, his distracted Affairs at home, the unsufferable Trials and Vexations with which his meek and enduring Temper was constantly exercis'd, in his Court, in his Camp, in his Council, and not a little in his Family: by what strange
and

and sudden Reverses of Providence, he was sometimes in Prison, and sometimes on the Throne; if, I say, the History of that unhappy Reign had entirely perish'd, and we were only to have judg'd of the Greatness of our Founder, from that of his Foundations; we should certainly have concluded, that no other than a fortunate, flourishing, and unmolested King, universally acknowledg'd and cheerfully obey'd by all his Subjects, easie in his Government, abounding in Wealth, unclog'd with War, and undisturb'd with Faction; could have leisure to form so noble, so deliberate, so well consider'd a Design, or Ability to accomplish it.

But since we are inform'd by Authentic undeniable History, that the case was far otherwise; how does it enhance our Obligation to him, that his peaceful Soul could not be diverted by so much Distraction, such pressing Occasions and irresistible Necessity, from pursuing his gracious Purpose; but that he should still persist, with an unshaken Resolution, to build our Walls, as the *Halcyon* is said to build her Nest, in the midst of Storms and Tempests!

He was acted in this, as in every thing else, by a hearty and sincere Zeal for promoting God's Glory and establishing his Worship, which was stronger than all his Discouragements from persevering in, or Temptations to intermit what he had so hopefully begun. No consideration of his own Wants and Exigencies could induce him to recall, or otherwise apply any part of that Revenue, which he had but tacitly promis'd, and intentionally consecrated to God's Service; tho' some who succeeded, did not so scrupulously withhold
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their Hands from what he had actually given, and solemnly dedicated to him.

Such Diminutions of our *Royal Founder's* Charity had been something more excusable, if what has been taken from us, as well as that which we still retain, had not been purely, and properly his own. He endow'd us with nothing that was seized, under pretence of Forfeiture, or otherwise extorted from any, by Arbitrary and Lawless Force: For he resolv'd, with good King *David*, not to *make an Offering to the Lord his God of that which cost him nothing.* 2 Sam. 24. 24.

With what obliging Circumstances was his Charity attended! and how must it endear his Memory to us when we consider, that he parted with so fair a Revenue, when he was living, and could have us'd it himself, when he was young and vigorous, and might have imploy'd it in State and Magnificence, or (as too many other Princes have done) in Luxury and Riot, when he was frequently straitned and distress'd, and sometimes needed himself the assistance he has provided for us; that our Foundations were laid by such Innocent and Righteous Hands, stain'd with no Blood, nor fill'd with the Fruits of Violence and Oppression: that this fair and beautiful Structure, (which was his first and peculiar Care) where we are now praising God, and commemorating our *Royal Patron*; was not erected on the Ruines of injur'd Families, nor does it stand here, to cover, shall I say? or proclaim rather, the guilty Greatness of its Founder, at once the Monument, and the intended Expiation of late-repentent Crimes!

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No. He had no enormous Offences to atone for, no other miscarriages but such as were incident to Human Frailty, and as few of those (so far as the watchfullest Eye could observe, and as they who were most privy to the secrets of his Soul have aver'd) as, not only any Prince, but any private Christian was ever charg'd with.

He contriv'd to make his Charity as serviceable to God's Glory, as useful, as comprehensive, and as enduring as was possible, and therefore he did not confine it to his own Time, but fix'd it in such

a manner, that all succeeding Ages might reap the advantage of it. *Illud enim semel profuit, hoc semper proderit Civitati. Cic.* This was doing Good always, that had been doing it but once.

It was in some measure to imitate the Divine Goodness, to extend his Care so far, and scatter his Bounty at so great a distance. It was, in the noblest and surest sense, doing Good to those, from whom he could not hope to receive any thing again. Nothing, I mean, but Praise and Thanks and a grateful acknowledgement of his Favors; for so much as this, 'tis in the power of Posterity to render, and 'tis their Duty to render it to their Ancestors, when they have deserv'd it by their praise-worthy Deeds, as I come now in the

Second Place to shew. There is no one sure will make the least Scruple, but that Gratitude to Benefactors, and Praise to them that have done well, whether they be living or dead, is as much a Debt, and as indispensably requir'd of us; as the Return of a Loan, the Discharge of a Contract, Performance of a Promise, Recompense for Service done, or the Acquittal of an Innocent Person from an Accu-

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Accusation not prov'd, or any other Instance of Commutative or Distributive Justice.

Nor does it therefore cease to be a Debt, because the Dead are insensible (if they are so) of the Honors that are paid to their Name and Memory. 'Tis what they expected, when living, and what we oblig'd our selves to pay by a tacit Compact, when we accepted their Benefits, and as they went out of the World with a pleasing Assurance of leaving a good Name behind 'em; 'tis both unjust to them, and discouraging to others that are well-enclin'd, to defeat that Expectation.

There is indeed no Inclination, next to that of preserving our Being, which we find more deeply implanted in us, than that of preserving our Memory: nor is there any Aversion so strong, if we except the Dread of temporal, and the more amazing Horror of eternal Death, no Thought so unwelcome to us; as the Expectation of being either soon forgotten, when we are dead, or scandalously remember'd.

There are few so hardy and regardless of the Opinion of After-times concerning 'em, as not to be influenc'd by it, to some Degree, in the Conduct of their Lives. And next to the Satisfaction of a good Conscience, and the agreeable Reflection of being acquitted and justified in the sight of God; the most desirable thing one can wish for, is, the Favor and Approbation, the Esteem and Good Will of Men; to have one's Integrity approv'd by the concurrent Testimony of all he has convers'd with, to be lov'd, when living, and
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honor'd, when Dead; never to be mention'd but in Terms of Decency and Respect: never but with the Addition of good or worthy, of honorable, brave or generous, or some such Expression that may denote the high Opinion we have of a singular Worth and peculiar Excellence.

It has indeed been the affected Wish of some vain Pretenders to Philosophy, and an immoderate Contempt of the World, that they might live and dye in it unheeded and unknown: that no Chronicle might record their Actions, no Register their Names, that they might live to themselves, and pass their Days in silent Contemplation, and Reflection on their own Merit, which they desir'd might be conceal'd from the Rest of Mankind.

But if these were their real Sentiments, how came we to be so well acquainted with 'em, or to know that ever there were such Men, who thought and reason'd at this Rate? Who drew 'em from their belov'd Obscurity and shew'd 'em to the World? By what Chance did we hear of their wise singularities, and sententious Paradoxes? Did not they themselves designedly make 'em public, whilst they artfully contriv'd to recommend themselves to the World, by the Elegancy and Quaintness of those very Sayings in which they express'd their Contempt of it?

'Tis plain then that the Love and Desire of Praise is a Natural Passion, And tho', as in other Passions, the Excess of it is criminal: (especially, when we are acted by that, and no other Motive,
or

or when we love the Praise of Men more than the Praise of God) yet there is a sober and innocent Degree of it, that neither can be rooted out, nor ought to be discourag'd. And 'tis in vain for any Man to pretend he does not value it, for we shall always be ready to conclude, he is even then aiming at it, when he tells us so.

The Heathen World, whose Notions of a future State were very languid and obscure, had little other Encouragement but the Prospect of recommending themselves to their own and After-Ages, to animate and excite 'em to Vertuous Performances, or engage 'em either to subject themselves to unnecessary Hazards, or to relinquish their private Interest for the sake of the Public Good.

The Founders of Kingdoms, the Inventors of Sciences, the Contrivers of Laws, Men famous for Arms or Arts, had all of 'em this Recompense in view. Even they who have recorded the remarkable Acts of others have had an eye to their own Renown too, and it was always the Poets Boast that they had immortaliz'd their Heros and themselves.

And in Compliance with this Natural Inclination of Mankind to be remembred after their Decease, and to have it said that such Persons were once in Being, and after what Manner they Signaliz'd themselves; there have been various Methods deviz'd of perpetuating the Memory of remarkable

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able Men and Actions, such as Statues and Coins, Pillars and Inscriptions, &c.

And thus far, could they have stop'd here, their Zeal was commendable enough: But when they proceeded yet farther to erect Altars and Temples too, and to pay Divine Honors to mortal Men, when I say either Excess of Gratitude to such as had been their real Deliverers, or (which is worse) an officious Flattery toward Tyrants and Oppressors, had transported 'em to that extravagant Pitch of Superstition, when, with an undistinguishing Hand, they as well bestow'd such Marks and Testimonies of their esteem on a *Nero* or a *Domitian*, as on a *Titus* or a *Trajan*; this gives us a sad and convincing Proof how liable the best things are to be corrupted, and how easily we are led on from an Opinion or Practice, which in its Original was innocent and well intended, either to an unwarrantable Degree of it, or to a wrong Application of it, and misplacing it on unworthy Objects.

We may look even into the Christian Church, and find Matter enough for this Complaint. The Memory of those who suffer'd Persecution for the sake of Christ, and laid down their Lives in Defence of the Gospel; was always dear and precious in the Esteem of such as were Professors of the same Faith. The Days of their several Martyrdoms, under the Name of Birth Days were annually commemorated: solemn Returns of Thanks were made to God, who had adorn'd his Church with such bright and illustrious Patterns: The As-

sistances

sistances of his Grace were devoutly implor'd for all who were under the like Pressures, or subject to the Same Temptations, that they might be enabled to copy such glorious Examples, and persist in the Faith with equal Resolution.

Thus modest and inoffensive in the first Institution were the Festivals appointed, by Order of the Church, in Respect to the Memory of departed Saints. But the scandalous Abuses that have arose from this innocent Practice, and which still prevail in the *Romish Church*, are too notorious to be deny'd, and too gross to be defended.

Instead of that decent Regard that is due to their Name and Memory, they worship and adore 'em, and whom they should only praise, they deify. They supplicate and invoke 'em with the same humble Gesture, in the same Terms of Reverence and Devotion in which they address themselves to God himself. They consecrate Altars to 'em, offer up the pretended Sacrifice of the Mass to their Honor, and (which exceeds all Bounds) they petition for Pardon of Sin, not only thro' their Intercession, but thro' the Vertue of their Merits too.

Nay, they do not only confer such undue and profane Honors, on such as were really eminent in their Generation for true Piety, and a constant Perseverance in the Faith; but (which highly aggravates their Idolatrous Practices) they first make Saints of very bad Men, and then from such Saints they make 'em Gods. They celebrate and canonize 'em for those very Actions, which ought rather

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ther to expose 'em to Ignominy and Hatred, and vilely prostitute the most distinguishing Reward, that can be given to shining Vertue, on this side Heaven, whilst they croud their Annals with fictitious Worthies, and stuff their Calendars with not only Fabulous and Legendary, but execrable Saints.

Our *pious Founder* sure (whom they once had form'd a Design of canonizing, tho' even that had been unpardonable) would far better have grac'd their Calendar, than executed Regicides and barbarous Assassins.

But, blessed be God! we have the Happiness to be Members of a *purser Church*, which teaches us to pay that Veneration, and only that, to the pious Memory of such as have departed in the Faith, which is lawfully due to 'em, without encroaching on the Divine Prerogative. We are taught to love and reverence, to praise and imitate their Vertues, but not to deify or idolize them.

And 'tis much to be desir'd, that Men would keep to such a happy Mean, as neither profanely to turn that Respect into Religious Adoration; nor on the other hand treat 'em with an irreverent Scorn, or rude Neglect, endeavoring to abolish the Remembrance of their Vertues.

For I cannot but observe to you, that there is an Extreme on this side too, to be avoided. There are some who will not see the Difference between
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Civil Honor and Religious Worship, who fly so fast from Superstition, that they know not where to stop, and think they can never get far enough from *Popery*, till they are quite broke loose from all sort of Awe or Reverence, for Persons, or Places, or Times, or Things Sacred, decrying all this as Bigotry and Superstition.

But as the Compilers of our excellent Liturgy have prudently, and with great Judgment remov'd whatsoever might give any just Cause of Offence in this Matter, since the Days appointed to be observ'd in Memory of Holy Persons departed are so very few, and those we do commemorate of such undoubted Sanctity, none but the first and brightest Ornaments of the Christian Faith; 'tis very strange that such a Practice as this, so pious and reasonable in its Institution, and now so free from any Abuse in the Exercise thereof, should still be imputed to us, as a Relique of Popish Superstition, which so manifestly appears to have been the constant Usage of the *Primitive Church*, long before Popery it's self had a Beginning.

And if those who take Exception at our Celebration of such Festivals, as if God was thereby rob'd of his Honor, would but consult the public Offices of our Church on these Occasions, (and particularly the Collect for this Day) they might soon be convinc'd, that however the Day is call'd by the Name of the respective Saint; the whole Worship is paid to God alone. We endeavor to approach him by no other Mediator, but his beloved Son, and urge no Merits, but only his.
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We return thanks indeed for the Examples of glorified Saints, but put up no Prayers either for, or to 'em.

But as to the Dead in general, whoever has been useful and serviceable in his Generation, whoever has done or suffer'd any thing for the Name of Christ, whoever has abounded in good Works and the Labor that proceedeth of Love, whoever has either done us Good, or set us a good Example, has a Right to be mention'd by us after his Decease in Terms of Respect, Esteem and Value. 'Tis our Duty to praise the Vertues of those, who have been thus signally beneficial to Mankind, and while we praise, to imitate 'em too.

And this is the best Return we can make to our *Royal Founder*, nor can we more acceptably thank him for his Charity, than by following the Example of his Piety. And as our Obligation to such a Behavior, as may in some Measure make us resemble so fair a Pattern, is peculiarly great; so would our Neglect be inexcusable. For if such unwearied Devotion, such unblemish'd Chastity, such strict Sobriety, such a modest, meek and humble Frame of Mind, so regular a Conduct of Life, and such a remarkable Concurrence of every Grace and Vertue, was consistent with the *Royal Dignity*; what could be said in Excuse for us, if we should not excel in the same Vertues, but especially, if any of those Vices should find Admittance in his *College*, which he banish'd from his *Court*?

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We have certainly in this State of Life, much greater Opportunities of being good, and fewer Temptations to be ill, than can ordinarily be expected amidst the gay Objects and flattering Allurements that surround a Throne.

Nay the Vertue of our *good King* was so much the more conspicuous, in that, according to the Principles of the Church he was a Member of, (the best which was then visible, tho' a very bad one, and over-run with Errors and Corruptions) under the Protection of Wealth, he might have sinn'd to his Heart's Content; and that very Bounty he has bestow'd on us, would have purchas'd for him such a plentiful Store of *Absolutions, Pardons* and *Indulgences*, as might have quieted his Conscience, and made him secure of his Salvation, in whatever Vices he had indulg'd himself.

But he had the Grace (in a good sense) to shame his Profession by his Practice: and whatever his Religion was, his Life was certainly *reform'd*. And I wish to God that all who are now admitted into a *purser Church*, were no impurer Members.

Blessed be that Divine Providence, which gave this excellent Prince both the Power and the Will to be the Author of so great and good an Undertaking, and inspir'd him with so sincere a Zeal for promoting Christian Knowledge, and true Piety.

And blessed be the same good Providence, which in different Ages has successively rais'd up so many

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ny other Founders of Societies, which compose this learned and venerable Body, and other Benefactors both to us and them. May they for ever remain prosperous, flourishing and successful. May they continue to abound in Religion and Learning, Industry and Morality, Duty and Loyalty, good Order and Discipline, and every thing that is commendable; to the Encouragement of our Benefactors and Joy of our Friends, to the Benefit of the Nation, the Disappointment of those who wish us Ill, or would rejoyce at our Miscarriages, the Security of our present Advantages, and the Enlargement of them by farther Accessions, but above all, to the furtherance of the Gospel and the Glory of Almighty God.

To whom with the Son and the Holy Ghost, &c.



F I N I S.

